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Atty Docket No. 015258-017610US

PTO FAX NO.: **1 703 872-9311**ATTENTION: Examiner Staicovici, S.
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1. Reply

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By: K. LeMond

PATENT
Attorney Docket No.: 015258-017610US
Client Ref. No.: P.6623

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of:

ANDREAS WALDER

Application No.: 09/082,309

Filed: May 20, 1998

For: METHOD OF THE PRODUCTION
OF EXPANDABLE PLASTICS
GRANULATE

Examiner: Staicovici, S.

Art Unit: 1732

REPLY PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. § 1.193

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Assistant Commissioner for Patents

Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

In response to the Examiner's "ORDER RETURNING UNDOCKETED APPEAL TO EXAMINER" of June 21, 2002, Appellant submits herewith an Appendix for the claims on Appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX: CLAIMS ON APPEAL

1 16. A method, which does not use extruders, for the production of
2 expandable plastics granulate from a plastics melt and a fluid blowing agent that is, when
3 at a pressure within a predetermined pressure range, only partly soluble in the melt, the
4 method comprising the steps of:

5 dispersing the blowing agent in the melt with shearing of the melt thereby
6 creating a mixture;

7 retaining the mixture within a predetermined pressure range for a
8 predetermined retention time;

9 subjecting the mixture to less shearing, with respect to the shearing during
10 the dispersing step, during the predetermined retention time;

11 cooling the mixture to a temperature that is above the solidification
12 temperature of the melt;

13 granulating the cooled mixture; and

14 acting on the mixture with static mixer elements; and

15 wherein the dispensing of the blowing agent and the retaining of the
16 mixture is carried out in a single apparatus in which the mixture is acted upon
17 continuously by means of the static mixing elements as the mixture moves through the
18 apparatus for avoiding segregation.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the cooling is performed at least
2 partly by components that also act on the mixture for static mixing.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the cooling is performed in a static mixer
2 having elements crossing each other and formed as heat exchanging pipes.

1 19. The method of claim 16 further comprising forming the mixture after
2 cooling to form strands and chilling formed strands with a coolant.

1 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the chilling is performed with water.

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- 1 21. The method of claim 19 further comprising forming the formed
2 strands into granules by disintegration.
- 1 22. The method of claim 16 further comprising adding at least one additive to the
2 melt.
- 1 23. The method of claim 16 wherein a pressure drop during the dispersing step is
2 larger than a pressure drop during the retaining step.
- 1 24. The method of claim 23 further comprising increasing the pressure which the
2 melt is subjected to in-between the dispersing step and the retaining step.
- 1 25. The method of claim 16 wherein a pressure drop during the cooling step is
2 larger than a pressure drop during the retaining step.
- 1 26. The method of claim 25 further comprising increasing the pressure which the
2 melt is subjected to in-between the retaining step and the cooling step.
- 1 27. Canceled.
- 1 28. The method of claim 16 wherein the dispersing step is performed in a
2 first static mixer and the retaining step is performed in a second static mixer.
- 1 29. The method of claim 28 further comprising pumping the mixture into
2 a third static mixer having elements crossing each other and formed as heat exchanging
3 pipes for performing the cooling step.